Actions Speak Louder Than Words

by Julian Amsel

Summary: Ash finally learns the truth.... and the truth is returned.
(Warning, it's a Shishi fic)

Actions Speak Louder Than Words

"Blastoise, return!" Ash cried, holding out his pokeball. The youth
grinned, high on the energy of winning another battle. But of course,
it wasn't the battle itself that brought him such joy. It was the
fact that he had finally, after all these years, defeated his biggest
rival, and won the title of Pokemon Master. Only four years ago, he
had started out on his pokemon journey. And four years ago, he
arrived at the place he was today, Indigo Plateau, fighting against
the person who had once been his friend. He had lost, and felt the
shame of bitter defeat. But now, now, after such a long time, after
much hard work and strict training, he had finally won. Finally
won...

"Good battle." Gary said, smiling as he walked up to Ash. "Really...
you deserved to win." Ash stared at his rival, blinking in disbelief.
Not only had he won, but Gary was congratulating him! "I never
thought I'd live to hear you say that." he said slowly, shaking his
head. "I never thought I'd say it either," Gary replied "...But I
meant it." Somethings weird, Ash thought. He's being too friendly...
this isn't the Gary I know. This is like the Gary I... used to know.
"Gary?" Ash asked softly, looking up into his friend's soft brown
eyes. "Can we be friends now? I guess you probably figured out that I
didn't exactly like fighting you all this time... I just... why did
you break off our friendship like that?" He shifted uncomfortably and
pulled the brim of his cap down over his eyes, wishing he hadn't
sounded like such an idiot. Gary bit his lip, unable to look his
former friend in the face. He couldn't tell him the reason, not even
after all this time. He couldn't possibly... "That's something I
can't tell you." Gary replied after a pause. "Not now, not ever." he
sighed, and looked at Ash, his eyes once again cold, hard, uncaring.
"I've got to go. Got things to do, pokemon to train.." Ash's
expression hardened into an icy glare. "You're not leaving here

without telling me why you did it." He reached out and put his hand on his friend's shoulder, his grip tight enough to show that he was serious. For a moment Ash hesitated, not used to seeing himself act so coldly toward anyone, not even Gary. "So tell me." Looking at his friend's face, he saw how Gary had cringed when he had touched him, as if his hands were of ice and his gaze like poison. "Ash..." Gary whispered, eyes staring into those of his former friend, not looking at him, but at his own reflection, staring back at himself through Ash's obsidian-like pupils. "What if you had a friend you cared about more than any other.... you'd do anything for that person, anything at all, as long as it made them happy.. and then something inside of you told you that you care about him _too_ much... that you didn't just care about him any more.... and you felt that the feelings you had for him were wrong.. totally completely wrong..." he paused, eyes glistening with suppressed tears. He looked at Ash, voice sad, soft. "What would you do then, Ash? What would you do if you knew you could never tell anyone, especially that one person? Would you let it eat away inside you, or would you contain it, but let it out as anger? Would you...." he choked on his words, a tear rolling down his cheek. "Would you make him your enemy, and let him think you hate him, when you really loved him for so long, but knew you couldn't tell him, because if you did he'd turn away from you?" He sighed. "I gotta go...." Lowering his eyes, he tore himself away from Ash's grasp and walked from his friend, an air of shame about him, quickly enough so as to escape Ash's reaction, but slowly enough to hear Ash run to catch up to him.

"Gary, wait!" Ash called, rushing over to him. "Wait..... for me...." Something in Ash's voice convinced Gary to turn around. "What do you want?" he asked, eyes red with tears. Ash hesitated a second. I've never seen him cry like that, he thought. Wait, I have. Back then... when he told me we were enemies... "If you've got something to say, then say it." Gary said, voice cracked. "If you hate me now.... then that's alright. I can take it." I have to tell him, Ash thought quickly. I have to.... "Gary..." Ash whispered. "Why didn't you tell me before?" Narrowing his eyes, Gary once again struggled to regain his usual coldness. "Because I knew you would become my enemy if I told you. This way..... it was better this way. Nobody got hurt..." "No." Ash said softly. "You're wrong... very wrong. Somebody got hurt, Gary. The both of us did." "What do you mean by that?" Gary snapped. "I thought you enjoyed competing with me. I thought it didn't really matter to you that we.. that I...." he stopped in mid sentence, and clenched his teeth in frustration. "You made new friends." he said at last. "What happened to me didn't matter to you any more." "Gary..." Ash said, placing his hand on his friend's shoulder. He leaned in close so that their noses were nearly touching, and looked him straight in the eyes. "It mattered. Gods, did it ever matter. It hurt, to think you hated me like that. And now I know it hurt you, too..." he paused, trying to think of the right words. "Do you remember what I said after you told me we weren't ever going to be friends again?" Gary shook his head. "You whispered something as I walked away... I never knew what you said, and I didn't think it mattered..." Ash's eyes softened. "It did matter, Gary. Because if you heard me... this never would've happened." "What're you trying to say?" Gary asked, looking at him strangely. "It couldn't have made that much of a difference. Tell me... what was so important?" Ash hesitated, looking into his friend's eyes. What do I tell him? he thought. How do I say this right, so that he knows...? "Actions speak louder than words," Ash whispered. Eyes shining, he leaned over and gently kissed Gary, hoping he was doing the right

thing.

Gary's eyes opened wide in surprise at the touch of Ash's lips on his. Trembling, he returned the kiss, finally relaxing as he wrapped his arms around Ash and held him close. When he finally felt Ash pull away, he stared at the younger boy, mystified. "Ash.." he whispered. "You...?" "I love you, Gary." Ash murmured, resting his head on Gary's shoulder. "I just... never had the guts to tell you, because I didn't know how you'd react.... but now I know...." He felt a strange wetness on his cheek, and looked up to see Gary, tears falling from his eyes. "What's wrong?" Gary smiled. "I'm just so happy... until now, I thought I'd never hold you, never hear you say you love me... I'm glad I was wrong." "Me too... I love you. I always will." "You were right." Gary whispered, kissing Ash softly. "Actions speak louder than words."

Author's notes: I know this is slightly cheesy, but hey, it's my first Shishi fic, alright? And if you've got comments, let me hear 'em. After all, I wanna get better at writing.=)

End
file.